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ABSTRACT

Much of the responsibility for poor teaching of history at the secondary level lies with those who teach college history rather than those who teach teachers. One approach to new methods of history instruction is the development and use of inquiry models. Crucial to this approach is the involvement of students and teacher in model building--an element frequently lacking in "packaged inquiry" materials, which often stifle the opportunity for self-generated questions and pre-define the scope of investigation. The most difficult task of model building is getting students to understand the process and ask the kinds of questions which will enable them to gather the data needed to accomplish the goals--in the example used here--determining the causes of the American Revolution. Once this is accomplished, it is time to begin actual model building, which consists of 3 steps: 1) determine area of investigation, 2) establish requirements for solving problem, and 3) gather data. The model has several uses--for investigation, as shown here, for evaluating historical interpretations, and hypothesis testing. Finally, to determine whether students can build inquiry models, one can use individual models, or devise an exam which tests this ability. ("Steps in Model Building" and "Inquiry Model for the Causes of the American Revolution" are appended.) (JLB)

TRAINING TEACHERS TO TEACH INQUIRY THROUGH THE USE OF "INQUIRY MODELS" IN THE TEACHING OF COLLEGE HISTORY COURSES

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The "sound and fury" of the New Social Studies will signify little unless teachers are better trained in its techniques. More specifically, the use of "packaged inquiry" alone is no substitute for an inquiring teacher, for new materials in the hands of a poorly trained teacher produce no better results than older ones. Unfortunately, most of us tend to teach history the way we were taught. But even the best methods at the college level seldom produce sufficient variety to give students a true test of alternatives. While this influence can lessen with time, its grip has a long half-life, in some cases as long as the college notes are legible.

What I propose today, therefore, is to shift much of the responsibility for poor teaching of history at the secondary level from those who teach teachers to those who teach history. While this paper will focus on history, it takes little imagination to apply this to all the social studies. It is easy for me to shift this responsibility since I must teach both methods and history classes at Iowa State University as well as supervise student teachers, which seems to be a practical test of the other two. In addition, my ten years experience in the secondary classroom gives me the perspective of the classroom teacher. As a teacher of a class in social studies methods, I've moved steadily in the direction of teaching a variety of materials, mini-courses if you like, rather than just explaining the new methods. My students purchase the materials highschool students would use in the classroom, thus enabling me to teach by example. My students also practice using the materials. This, however, is a stop-gap measure at best, for three quarter-hours in a methods class can hardly blunt the impact of thirty to fifty quarter-hours of unimaginative history teaching. In the long-run then, the most effective way to train history teachers is by employing new techniques in the teaching of history. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate one such approach: the development and use of inquiry models in the teaching of a college-

level course on the American Revolution. The objective of the class, to quote from Teaching as a Subversive Activity, is to provide students with "genuine crap dectectors."

An inquiry model, as used in this presentation, is a process by which one systematically establishes what data are needed to explain, solve, describe clarify or show important relationships of historical phenomena. The model consists of related and subordinate questions, which, when answered, would describe, explain, solve, and clarify the relationship under investigation.

Let me emphasize the words "development and use" of inquiry models. Crucial to this approach is the involvement of the students in model building. It is here that this technique differs from others. A weakness of the "packaged inquiry" now being marketed is that these materials do not seem to provide students with the open-end experiences the term inquiry implies. In fact these new materials actually prevent the student from practicing at least two essential and creative skills he must learn in order to be inquisitive and skeptical, a true inquirer. First, the materials stifle the opportunity to ask questions by providing questions with their materials similar to those at the end of textbook chapters; second, the materials limit the scope of investigation by selecting the data from which a student is to draw conclusions.

When students engage in model-building activity, there are important implications. First, it says something about the class atmosphere. It is obvious that the class must sense the mood of inquiry. The best way that I know to do this is for the teacher to become an inquirer as well. In other words, ask real questions, questions to which the teacher himself has no certain answer. So much of what happens in the classroom is a charade, for questions are really saying "guess what I'm thinking." It is more honest, and in many cases better teaching, to tell students these answers. It is certainly more efficient. Another

implication of model building by students is that it says something about the role of the teacher. In general, teachers tend to stop teaching at the point when they should begin. Let me illustrate.

Exhibit I

Most energy in the classroom ought to be spent on stage two, getting the class to reach the objective, into orbit if you please, of becoming true inquirers.

Exhibit II

Model building focuses upon this second stage, although, as we shall see later, the first stage will not be neglected.

The most difficult task in model building is to get students to understand the process and thus ask the kind of questions which will enable them to gather the data needed to accomplish the goals, in this case determining the causes of the American Revolution. One example which illicits this kind of question is deciding the guilt or innocence of a defendant in a hypothetical case. The class can then discuss and develop a model for determining the guilt of innocence of the accused.

Having defined the model and acquainted students with the process, it is time to begin model building. This consists of three steps.

Exhibit III

As you can see, there are two ways to determine the area of investigation. While it would always be preferable for all the class to become enthused about the same topic, I have found this consensus difficult to develop. It is possible that a general class consensus can develop from a provocative film or from a discussion, in this case the idea of revolution. That is, students might decide they want to find out what causes revolutions. But the topic can also be selected ahead of time, thus allowing the teacher to see if sufficient materials are available.

The particular topic is not the key to student interest, but rather their involvement. The approach, not the content, makes the class relevant to students. For this reason, I selected the topic to be discussed in class; thus I could determine what materials students should purchase and what should be put on reserve in the library. As we shall see later, it is also possible for students to select and build models on topics of their choice.

The next step is to establish the requirements for completing the investigation. The class discusses what is necessary to adequately identify the causes of the American Revolution. This involves answering the main questions by subordinate questions which could be answered by data.

Exhibit IV

This is the most crucial point of the whole process of model building. It is also the most difficult for the students to accomplish.

Having established the requirements for completing the investigation, the discussion turns to the kind of data needed to answer the questions. We are not interested at this time in whether the data is available. Hence this discussion is partly speculative and open-ended because we are interested in the data which students believe are necessary to determine the causes of the American Revolution. The purpose is to establish an ideal standard; for example ask "What would you accept as evidence to establish the part of the model which asks: What did the colonists believe was the proper status between the colonists and Great Britain.?" The teacher can help by suggesting available sources of information. The discussion focuses on the validity of sources.

Next, the class, either individually or through dividing the tasks gather the data for the model. One aspect of data gathering is comparing what exists with what is needed and in many cases exposing the "data gap." Hence, many questions will either remain unanswered or inadequately answered. This serves to illustrate

the problems of reconstructing the past.

The model has several uses. I've just shown the first, using it for investigation. It has also been used in two other ways.

Exhibit V

One problem posed by data gathering is that there must be an adequate library. The most important result of model building, however, is not the data gathered, but the skills developed. In other words, the process is more important than the content. Or to be more current, the "medium is the massage."

Once built, the model serves as a useful tool for evaluating different interpretations of the subject. As students read an interpretation of the causes of the American Revolution, for example, they can determine the parts of the model emphasized and omitted by the historian. One can cover a wide range of interpretations by having one or two students concentrate on just one interpretation and then sharing their findings. This is an excellent way to study the historiography of an event. It allows students to read an entire work rather than the summaries generally found in most anthologies. Students are asked to summarize a writer's ideas, to identify the parts of the model covered by the writer, to determine questions they felt were adequately answered or partially answered, and to identify the data used by the writer to support his position. When all the authors have been read and the discussions completed, it is possible to plot the various interpretations on the model. The class is then able to determine the difference in emphasis between the various interpretations and to decide whether each difference is one of data or assumption. It also shows questions avoided by various writers.

The model is also useful for hypothesis testing. Here students are asked to establish a thesis about some problem in the course, in this case the question: Was the American Revolution a revolution? Students then determine the

requirements for substantiating their hypotheses. These are stated in the forms of arguments which are derived from the question: What do we need to know in order to substantiate the thesis? The main arguments are reduced to subordinate arguments which they can be answered by data. Let me illustrate. If you were attempting to establish the thesis that the American Revolution was a revolution, you might support it with the main argument depending on your definition of revolution, that a change occurred in the political leadership after the revolution. One then asks: what do you need to know in order to establish this? First, who ruled before the revolution? To answer this the political leaders must be identified, as well as their economic and social status. It must also be established if these leaders were effective. Lastly, you should determine the amount of participation in government by the populace. Similar questions would have to be asked about the period after the revolution. Historians have attempted to answer these questions and much of this data is available in secondary works. Again, I am not so concerned with the data gathering as with the questions asked. That is why the use of secondary works is acceptable. It might also be desirable to use primary sources for a part of the model. The teacher's role is one of interaction with students. Because students have committed themselves to a point of view and have attempted to substantiate it, individual models provide excellent perparation for group discussion.

Finally, how can you determine if students can build inquiry models? The use of the individual models are very helpful. It is possible, however, to devise an exam which tests their ability to build models. To accomplish this, I provide the students with a quotation stating a position on some part of the topic under consideration by the class. Students are then asked to develop a model to test the validity of the quotation. Their answers are to consist of four parts: 1) a statement about the validity of the quotation; 2) supportive

arguments and sub-arguments which, when answered or supported, tell you what you need to know in order to determine this statement's validity; 3) a list of the kind of data you need to know; 4) sources that could be used to locate the needed data.

In conclusion, let me state that I am not suggesting that this technique be used exclusively in teaching history. I would hope a student's experience would be more eclectic than that. The procedure described here is flexible enough to allow teachers to use as little or as much as students can stand. I've found it useful, for instance, in a survey class of 200 students, not to engage them in model building, but to build a model for them. This method can be implemented as rapidly or as slowly as teachers develop confidence in working with the method. It focuses upon the art of teaching and not, as so many proposals today, upon expensive gimmickry.

In general, I believe that this method will receive a receptive hearing from those who are concerned with teaching, either in their own courses or as methods instructors. It will be interesting to see the response when these ideas are presented to a group of historians this March at the Missouri Valley Historical Conference. I did present some of this material to my colleagues in the history department last May and the response was one of interest if not enthusiasm. But I firmly believe that more good history teaching will occur at the secondary level when more good history teaching occurs in our colleges and universities.

EXHIBIT III: STEPS IN MODEL BUILDING

First: Determine Area of Investigation - State the Problem

1. Open End

2. Teacher Directed

Second: Establish Requirements for Solving Problem

1. Determining What Questions must be Answered

2. Determining What Kind of Data is Needed to Answer Questions Raised by Requirements

Third: Gather Data

EXHIBIT V: USES OF MODEL IN TEACHING HISTORY

1. Investigation

2. Evaluating Historical Interpretations

3. Testing Hypothesis

EXHIBIT IV: INQUIRY MODEL FOR THE CAUSES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

I. What happened to make a large number of inhabitants in North America decide to change their status or relat onship with Great Britain in 1775-1776? (What do we need to know --data-- to establish this and where can this data be found?)

A. What was there in the status or relationship to Great Britain which the colonists believed should be changed?

1. What did the colonists believe was the proper status between the colonies and Great Britain?

a. Political Status:

b. Economic Status:

c. Social Status

d. Religious Status

2. What did the colonists believe was the existing status between the colonies and Great Britain at the time of the conflict?

a. Political Status:

b. Economic Status:

c. Social Status:

d. Religious Status:

3. What did those who made policy in Great Britain believe was the proper status between Great Britain and the colonies?

a. Political Status:

b. Economic Status:

c. Social Status:

d. Religious Status:

B. What issues caused conflicts over the status of the relationship between the colonies and Great Britain which influenced the desire for change?

1. What issues involving the status and relationship between the colonies and Great Britain caused conflict?

a. What were the conflicts?

b. What issues were at stake in each conflict?

2. What issues of status caused the greatest antagonism to develop between the colonies and Great Britain over status? (What would we need to know to establish this?

a. Did the Antagonism have the greatest appeal as seen by:

1) Intensity of colonial protests and disorders

2) Intensity of public opinion

3) Number accepting and condoning actions of the colonists

b. Did the Colonists believe it was the most important antagonism as seen by:

1) Newspaper editorials

2) Resolutions from political bodies

3) Petitions and remonstrances

4) Utterances of political leaders

5) Observers

6) Letters, Diaries

II. Why were the issues involving the status of the Colonies to Great Britain Not resolved peaceably?

A. Why wouldn't Great Britain (those who made policy) grant the colonies the change in status they were demanding and were willing to fight to maintain what they believed should be the proper status?

1. Were there constitutional issues which were thought to be irreconcilable?

2. Were there individuals who sought to profit from the conflict?

3. Why did those who proposed conciliation unable to prevail?

4. Did those in power see a change in colonial status as a threat to British power and prestige?

B. Why were the colonists willing to resort to war in order to change the status or maintain the status at what they believed should be the proper relationship between the colonies and Great Britain?

1. Were the colonists motivated by propagandists of the revolution?

2. Did the colonists believe the British position was a threat to their autonomous assemblies?